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TORRINGTON RURAL DISTRICT

1963

REPORTS

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

For the Year ending
31st December, 1963.

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TORRINGTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Circumstances of the Torrington Rural District for 1963

By

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Medical Officer of Health.

and

F. G. GANE, F.F.S., M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.
Chief Public Health Inspector and Surveyor.

STAFF

Medical Officer of Health :—
Dr. H. M. THOMAS, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., D.C.H.

Chief Public Health Inspector and Surveyor :—
F. G. GANE, F.F.S., M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

Additional Public Health Inspector and Deputy Surveyor :—
C. A. KERSWILL, Cert. S.I.E.J.B.

Additional Public Health Inspector :—
T. S. Walker, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.
(From 22nd. December, 1963).

Health Department,
8, Cooper Street,
Bideford.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE TORRINGTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my ANNUAL REPORT for the year 1963.

One notable advance during the year was the unanimous decision of the Council to recommend that the present arrungement whereby your District Medical Officer of Health holds a "combined" appointment with four of the other north west Devon district authorities be changed to a "mixed" appointment with the County Council. This recommendation has since been endorsed by all the other authorities concerned and the change will take effect on the 1st. August, 1964. Thus a valuable link will be forged between the services provided by both the district council and the local health authority.

One welcomes, also, the decision of the Councilto appoint a second additional public health inspector to further the work in connection with meat inspection, housing and general public health duties.

It is a great pleasure to record once again ones appreciation of the support and encouragement given by the Chairman and members of the housing and public health committee, and the willing cooperation of the other chief officials.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

H. Mervyn Thomas.

August, 1964.

Torrington Rural District
1963

GENERAL STATISITCS

Area in acres	79,803
Population (Registrar General's mid-year estimate)	7,200
Number of Inhabited Houses	2,494
Rateable Value	£103,731
Sum realised by a Penny Rate	£415

VITAL STATISTICS

Live Births—Legitimate—Males 46 Females 32 Illegitimate—Males 5 Females 3	86
Crude Birth Rate	11.9
Stillbirths	1
Infant Deaths (under 1 year)	3
Infant Mortality Rate	34.8
Maternal Deaths	Nil
Total Deaths	96
Crude Death Rate	13.3

Causes of Death	Male	Female
Tuberculosis, Respiratory	1	Nil
Malignant Neoplasm, stomach	3	1
Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	1	1
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	Nil	3
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	2	4
Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	1	Nil
Diabetes	Nil	1
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	4	7
Coronary Disease, Angina	13	4
Hypertension with Heart Disease	3	2
Other Heart Disease	6	8
Other Circulatory Disease	2	2
Pneumonia	2	1
Bronchitis	4	1
Other Diseasees of the Respiratory System	3	Nil
Gasritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	1	Nil
Hyperplasia of Prostate	1	Nil
Congential Malformation	2	Nil
Other Defined and Ill-defined diseases	5	4
All Other Accidents	1	2
	55	41

Infectious Diseases Notified

Measles	7	Scarletina	13
Erysipelas	1	Acute Primary Pneumonia	16
Whooping Cough	3		

Housing

With the appointment of extra staff it is now possible to undertake a housing survey of the district on a systematic basis so as to indicate the best way of dealing with substandard houses in each parish.

Hitherto this authority has been most progressive in its policy in regard to improvement grants, and its record in this respect is most gratifying. Still a great deal more remains to be done to "sell" the idea of improvement to the landlords and tenants of houses capable of improvement, and to take appropriate action where dwellings are unfit for habitation and not capable of being made fit.

According to the recently published County Report on the 1961 Census, the dwellings in the district lacking in the various basic amenities are recorded as follows:-

	Torrington Rural District	Aggregate of Rural Districts in Devon for comparison
lacking cold water tap	303 (13.77%)	5,861 (7.25%)
lacking hot water tap	818 (37.18%)	21,387 (26.45%)
lacking fixed bath	891 (40.5 %)	20,415 (25.25%)
lacking water closet	507 (23.05%)	11,115 (13.75%)

It will be noted that this district appears to compare unfavourably with the average rural district in Devon, although it is possible that as a result of the comparatively large number of improvement grants made since 1961 the present position may be better.

Annual Report of Surveyor and Chief Public Health Inspector

DETAILS OF INSPECTIONS

Dwellings inspected under Housing Acts	26
Dwellings inspected under Public Health Acts	11
Re-inspections under Housing Acts	64
Re-inspections under Public Health Acts	20
Keeping of Animals	3
Offensive accumulations	3
Inquiries into cases of Infectious Disease	—
Number of Rooms disinfected	—
Visits to Factories	30
Visits to Bakehouses	8
Visits to Schools	5
Food Inspections (other than meat)	1
Visits to Food Preparing Premises (other than meat)	26
Number of Water Samples	3
Building Inspections under Bye-laws	250
Visits to Council Houses	220
Defective Drains	20
Drains examined	94
Plans investigated	139
Petroleum inspections	11
Dirty Houses	3
Sewage Works	271
Improvement Grants	226
Caravan Sites	11

HOUSING

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :

(1) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects 26

(2) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation 4

(3) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation 22

2. Remedy of Defects during the year without service of formal Notices :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action 40

3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

Proceedings under Public Health Acts :

Number of Dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the local Authority 13

Improvements carried out and nuisances abated :—

External	*No. of Premises*
Walls repaired	29
Roofs repaired	26
Guttering repaired	23
Downspouts repaired	23
Chimneys repaired	19
Water supply laid on into houses	10
New pumps provided	—
Wells cleansed	—
Well steinings repaired	—
New lengths drain laid	46
Defective drains repaired	30
New inspection chambers	50
Septic tanks repaired	4
New septic tanks	34
New gullies	50
New W.C.'s	51
Water Supply laid on to W.C.'s	50
W.C. cisterns renewed	11
New washing accommodation	1
Outbuildings repaired	6

Internal	*No. of Premises*
Walls replastered	23
Ceilings replastered	23
Windows repaired	29
Doors repaired	26
Floors repaired	21
Cooking appliances repaired or renewed	22
New sinks	14
New sculleries	—
Baths installed	57
Food storage improved	39
Stairs repaired	18
Hot water systems fixed	57

New Housing Accommodation

Number of new houses erected by local authority	—
Number of new houses erected by private enterprise	14

Council Housing Programme

During the year twelve two bedroomed bungalows were under construction and tenders were approved for the erection of a further 12. The Council now owns 172 houses and bungalows.

5 Discretionary Improvement grants were approved during the year bringing the total up to 158. In addition 38 standard grants were approved bringing the total up to 236.

The total expenditure to the end of the year was :—

Discretionary grants	£48,921
Standard grants	£20,858
	£69,779

Common Lodging Houses

There are no Common Lodging Houses in the district.

Caravans

Residential caravans do not present much of a problem. There are only 3 licensed sites for single caravans. In addition there are a few individually sited vans within the curtilage of dwellings used by the occupiers as permitted under the Act. There are also 2 exempt sites used by the Caravan Club and the Camping Club but these appear to be little used. Planning approval has been given for a holiday site at Seckington, Winkleigh and one at Smythan, Little Torrington.

FACTORIES ACT, 1961. Part I of the Act.

1—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors)

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of: Inspections (3)	Written notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ..	54	38	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	—	—	—	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	54	38	NIL	NIL

2—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars (1)	Number of cases in which defects were found: Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred: To H.M. Inspector (4)	By H.M. Inspector (5)	Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted (6)

Overcrowding (S.2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)...					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)					
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(*a*) Insufficient					
(*b*) Unsuitable or defective	2	2			
(*c*) Not separate for sexes					
Other offences (not including offences relating to Homework)					
TOTAL	8	3	NIL	NIL	NIL

OUTWORK—(Sections 133 and 134). Part VIII of the Act.

Nature of Work	Section 133			Section 134		
	No. of out-workers in August list required by Sect. 133 (1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Wearing apparel, Making, etc.	38	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL

REFUSE COLLECTION

The Council operates a fortnightly refuse collection covering most of the area except for a few isolated farms and cottages. The vehicle used is a diesel-operated Karrier Gamecock manned by two collector-drivers. The refuse is disposed of on three tips at Winkleigh, Merton and Roborough. The vehicle also collects the refuse from litter bins in the villages and on roadside lay-byes.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The villages of Winkleigh, Shebbear, Sheepwash, Taddiport, St. Giles-in-the-Wood, Kingscott, Roborough, Petrockstowe, Merton and Yarnscombe are now equipped with modern sewerage and sewage disposal systems. No works were completed during 1963 but Stibb Cross was nearing completion. Approval for Little Torrington scheme was awaited from the Ministry at the end of 1963. Detailed plans are now being prepared for Hollocombe and outlines for Weare Giffard and Dolton. Other villages requiring schemes to complete the Council's programme are High Bickington, Langtree, Beaford, Riddlecombe and Frithelstock.

These villages have sewage systems at the moment but they are obsolete and very unsatisfactory. It is very unfortunate that more rapid progress cannot be made in carrying out this very necessary work.

WATER SUPPLIES

The area is now very well served by the North Devon Water Board via a network of mains and all villages and hamlets are supplied. Only remote dwellings now rely on shallow wells for a supply.

The following new connections were made during the year :

46 Domestic 46 Trade

The total number of premises now connected to the mains is :

1,585 Domestic 202 Trade

(*excluding farm houses*)

There are no standpipes in the district.

The following is a list of the parishes showing the number of houses connected and an estimate of the population served :—

	No. of houses	*No. of population served*
Alverdiscott	43	129
Ashreigney	88	264
Beaford	82	246
Buckland Filleigh	16	48
Dolton	124	372
Dowland	17	51
Frithelstock	67	201
High Bickington	84	252
Huish	14	42
Huntshaw	11	33
Langtree	95	285
Little Torrington	64	192
Merton	92	276
Peters Marland	57	171
Petrockstowe	69	207
Roborough	33	99
St. Giles	101	303
Shebbear	111	333
Sheepwash	68	204
Weare Giffard	60	180
Winkleigh	247	741
Yarnscombe	39	117

The water is treated at the source to counteract plumbo-solvency. Samples of the water are frequently taken by the Board's officials for chemical and bacteriological examination and the results are notified to the Department.

RODENT DESTRUCTION

In conjunction with Torrington Borough Council a full-time Operator is shared by the two authorities.

The following work was carried out in the Rural District during the year :—

Number of Survey calls made :—

Private Houses	1,364
Refuse Tips and Sewage Works	41
Farms	163
Business Premises	23

Number of Premises treated :—

Private Houses	261
Refuse Tips and Sewage Works	19
Farms	88
Business Premises	2

OFFENSIVE TRADES

There is one gut scraping establishment in the district.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Slaughtering

There are two licensed slaughter houses in the district including an abattoir at Winkleigh. 100 per cent. meat inspection is at present carried out. The appointment of a second inspector has now relieved the pressure on the inspectorate, but irregular hours of slaughtering and week-end killing still cause much inconvenience.

TABLE A

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part

Figures in brackets are for 1961

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep Lambs and Goats	Pigs	Horses
Number killed (if known)	1792 (1646)	447 (617)	905 (3816)	37360 (54005)	11290 (16550)	— (—)
Number inspected	1792 (1646)	447 (617)	905 (3816)	37360 (54005)	11290 (16550)	— (—)
All Diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci						
Whole carcases condemned....	11 (6)	20 (11)	58 (27)	228 (148)	82 (30)	— (—)
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	100 (40)	146 (114)	2 (6)	1462 (1268)	1211 (538)	— (—)
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis and Cysticerci	6.1 (2.8)	32.6 (18.6)	6.6 (.8)	4.5 (2.6)	11.4 (3.5)	— (—)
Tuberculosis only Whole carcases condemned	— (—)	(—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (2)	— (—)
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	88 (95)	— (—)
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	.7 (.6)	— (—)
Cystircercosis Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	— (2)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	— (2)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)
Generalised and totally condemned	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE B

Summary of Meat Condemnations with cause and weight.

Food Condemned	Weight in lbs.
Due to Tuberculosis :	
Portions of 88 Pigs	1105lbs. *i.e.* 9cwts. 3qr. 13lbs.
Due to Diseases other than Tuberculosis :	
Carcases and Organs of 11 Oxen	3900
Carcases and Organs of 20 Cows	6840
Carcases and Organs of 58 Calves	2340
Carcases and Organs of 82 Pigs	5395
Carcases and Organs of 228 Sheep	10,908
Parts of 100 Oxen	1492
Parts of 1211 Pigs	5167
Parts of 1462 Sheep	3500
Parts of 2 Calves	14
Parts of 146 Cows....	2344
	41,900lbs.
	i.e. 18tons 14cwts. 0qrs. 12lbs.

Condemned meat was disposed of through trade channels after staining with napthalene green.

TABLE C

Other Foodstuffs .... Nil

FOOD PREMISES

The following is a list of food premises in the district :—

Grocery and General Stores	32
Bakers	3
Butchers	5
Fishmongers	1
Public Houses	17
Other Hotels and Cafes	5
	63

Seventeen Premises are registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, for the sale of pre-packed ice-cream and two for the manufacture and sale of fish and chips. No ice-cream is manufactured in the district. 26 visits to food premises were made during the year.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACT

There are two registered swill boiling plants in the district.

PETROLEUM LICENCES

30 petroleum storage licences were issued during the year.

SLAUGHTERING LICENCES

12 licences were issued during the year to slaughtermen.

PLANS

138 plans were submitted during the year, 107 were approved, 21 disapproved, and 10 cancelled.

All plans were considered by the Council's Planning Committee before submission to the Divisional Planning Committee of the Devon County Council.

I attended most of the monthly meetings of the Divisional Planning Committee.

STAFF

Again I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Kerswill for the conscientious way in which he has carried out meat inspection, often under trying conditions. I would also like to thank your Clerk, Mr. B. W. Leatt, and Dr. Thomas for their close co-operation and assistance at all times.